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## Safety Tips For Driving In A Highway Work Zone

Lake County, and in an effort to keep both drivers and workers safe, the Lake County Division of Transportation offers a few tips for the inevitable drive through a construction zone.

In 2001, accidents in highway work zones resulted in over 1,000 deaths nationally. Both drivers and workers are at risk, so watch out for road construction zones and workers performing construction and maintenance work on highways throughout the county.

In road construction and repair zones drivers should avoid tailgating and always be aware of the posted construction speed limit. Posted speed limits are frequently lower in construction work zones, and in Illinois, fines for speeding are often doubled in work zones. Drivers should also watch for directional signs, flaggers and sudden changes in road conditions. To reduce unnecessary distractions, make an effort to stay within your lane, avoid talking on cell phones and keep both hands on the steering wheel while traveling through a construction zone.

"We have a very limited construction season in Lake County because of the long winter, resulting in numerous projects taking place at the same time throughout the county," according to Lake County Director of Transportation/County Engineer Marty Buehler.

"Workers and equipment operators have the difficult task of performing their jobs, watching other workers and keeping an eye on traffic traveling through the work zone. We ask drivers to take precautions that will increase their own safety, as well as the safety of workers," Buehler added.

Lake County Division of Transportation line-painting crews paint lines twice a year, at the end of April or beginning of May and again in August. A large paint truck with flashing yellow lights and an identification sign leads a procession of three vehicles traveling at nine miles per hour as paint is applied to the pavement. Workers place cones identifying wet paint and then remove the cones when the paint dries in approximately three minutes to a half-hour.

Dry paint does not wash-off of vehicles, so avoid crossing freshly painted lines, and do not pass the paint crew until directed to do so by the crew. Paint crews will direct drivers to pass as traffic permits. Drivers may use the right lane to pass a crew painting lines on a four-lane roadway.

The Lake County Division of Transportation paints lines on all county and township roadways and on local roads when contracted by villages and cities.

Division of Transportation highway maintenance crews also mow grass in the right-of-way immediately adjacent to county roadways and in the median of divided highways. Tractors can only travel at a maximum speed of 18 miles per hour, so vehicles should approach them carefully and provide plenty of room. "Mowing Ahead" signs warn drivers to slow down and pay attention to workers.

## Safety Tips For Traversing A Road Construction Zone – 3 of 3

For further information, please visit the Division of Transportation on the Lake County website, located at <a href="www.co.lake.il.us">www.co.lake.il.us</a>. The Lake County Division of Transportation serves county residents and visitors by, among other things, planning, constructing, maintaining and working to improve the county transportation infrastructure.